

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An exchange-coupled film in which an antiferromagnetic layer and a ferromagnetic layer sandwich are stacked and in which a direction of magnetization of the ferromagnetic layer sandwich is pinned,

wherein said ferromagnetic layer sandwich comprises a first ferromagnetic layer containing a ferromagnetic material of the body-centered cubic structure, and a pair of second ferromagnetic layers containing a ferromagnetic material of the face-centered cubic structure and formed on respective sides of the first ferromagnetic layer, and

wherein said antiferromagnetic layer contains a disordered alloy chosen from the group consisting of IrMn alloys, RuRhMn alloys, FeMn alloys and RuMn alloys, and said antiferromagnetic layer is kept in contact with one of said second ferromagnetic layers, and

wherein said antiferromagnetic layer has a thickness of 10 nm or ~~less~~. less, and

wherein said exchange-coupled film yields a high exchange coupling energy J_k of not less than $263 \mu\text{J}/\text{m}^2$.

2. (Original) The exchange-coupled film according to Claim 1, wherein the ferromagnetic layer sandwich further comprises a third ferromagnetic layer placed through a nonmagnetic intermediate layer on the opposite side to the antiferromagnetic layer with the other second ferromagnetic layer in between.

3. (Original) A spin valve film comprising the exchange-coupled film as set forth in Claim 1; a nonmagnetic, conductive layer laid on the ferromagnetic layer sandwich of the exchange-coupled film; and a free layer laid on the nonmagnetic, conductive layer and containing a ferromagnetic material.

4. (Original) A thin film magnetic head comprising the spin valve film as set forth in Claim 3, and a pair of magnetic shield layers placed at positions where the spin valve film is sandwiched therebetween from both sides in a stack direction of the spin valve film, and containing a soft magnetic material.

5. (Original) The thin film magnetic head according to Claim 4, comprising a pair of electrode layers electrically connected to the spin valve film and adapted for allowing an electric current to flow parallel to a film surface of the spin valve film.

6. (Original) The thin film magnetic head according to Claim 4, comprising a pair of electrode layers electrically connected to the spin valve film and adapted for allowing an electric current to flow perpendicular to a film surface of the spin valve film.

7. (Original) A magnetic head apparatus comprising the thin film magnetic head as set forth in Claim 4; and a head supporting device for supporting the thin film magnetic head.

8. (Original) A magnetic recording/reproducing apparatus comprising the magnetic head apparatus as set forth in Claim 7; and a magnetic recording medium for implementing magnetic recording/reproduction in collaboration with the thin film magnetic head of the magnetic head apparatus.

9. (Previously Presented) The exchange-coupled film according to Claim 1, wherein said antiferromagnetic layer has a thickness in the range of 5 to 10 nm.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) The exchange-coupled film according to Claim 1, wherein said antiferromagnetic layer has a thickness in the range of 5 to 10 nm, ~~nm~~ and, ~~wherein said exchange-coupled film yields a high exchange-coupling energy J_k of not less than $234 \mu\text{J}/\text{m}^2$.~~